

FOR & AGAINST ESSAYS

One type of argumentative essay is that which gives advantages and disadvantages (for and against). It is a formal piece of writing in which a topic is considered from opposing points of view.

A good essay of this type should consist of:

a) **INTRODUCTION**

Paragraph 1: You state the topic. This means that you talk generally about the topic without giving your opinion.

b) **MAIN BODY**

Paragraph 2: You give the points for (advantages) along with your justification.

Paragraph 3: You give the points against (disadvantages) along with your justification.

c) **CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

Paragraph 4: You express either a balanced consideration of the topic OR your opinion, that is, for example, by expressing whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or vice versa.

NOTE: In this type of essay writing, you must NOT include opinion words (*I believe, I think, etc.*) in the introduction or the main body. Opinion words can ONLY be used in the final paragraph, where you may state your opinion on the topic.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Make a list of the points for and against before you start writing.
- Write well-developed paragraphs in which the points you present are supported with justification (i.e. reasons or examples). Make sure each paragraph has more than one sentence (e.g. *One advantage of using a word processor is that it saves time. It is much quicker to make corrections on one than it is to do them by hand*).
- Do not use informal style (e.g. short forms, colloquial language, contractions, etc.) or strong language (e.g. *I firmly believe, etc.*)
- Try to include a quotation relevant to the topic you are writing about. For example, if you are writing an essay on space exploration, a quotation you may include is '*One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind*' (Neil Armstrong).
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarises what the paragraph is about:
 - **Topic sentence:** '*However, there are disadvantages to owning a house.*'
 - **Point and justification:** '*Firstly, it can be rather expensive and tiring to maintain. For example, repairs to the outside of the house can be costly, not to mention the time-consuming task of caring for a backyard or garden.*'

LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES:

- To introduce points: *one major advantage/disadvantage of, a further advantage, one point of view in favour of/against, regarding, concerning*
- To list points: *in the first place, first of all, to start with, firstly, secondly, thirdly, finally, last but not least*
- To add more points to the same topic: *what is more, furthermore, also, in addition to this/that, besides, apart from this/that, not to mention the fact that*
- To make contrasting points: *on the other hand, however, in spite of, while, nevertheless, despite, even though, although, it can be argued that*
- To introduce examples: *for example, for instance, like, especially, such as, in particular*
- To conclude: *to sum up, all in all, all things considered, in conclusion, on the whole, taking everything into account, as was previously stated*

TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS:

The first paragraph may:

- Make reference to a strange scene or situation, e.g. *Some scientists believe that in the future everyone will be genetically perfect.*
- Address the reader directly, e.g. *Are you aware of any characteristics which you may have inherited from your parents?* or ask a rhetorical question (question to which no answer is expected), e.g. *Isn't it amazing how some children look so much like their parents?*
- Start with a quotation, e.g. *'Genetics holds the key to the future'*

The last paragraph may:

- State a personal opinion, e.g. *In my opinion, I believe, In my view, It seems to me, The way I see it, I think, etc.*
- Give the reader something to consider, e.g. *Perhaps the world would be a safer and more efficient place if everyone was genetically perfect.*
- End with a quotation, e.g. *'Genetics holds the key to the future'*, or a rhetorical question, e.g. *What will they think of next?*

FOR & AGAINST ESSAY - SAMPLE

'Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being your own boss.'

Have you ever considered becoming your own boss? In recent years, the number of people choosing to start their own business has risen significantly. Many claim that this is because more and more people are no longer content to work for someone else.

One of the main advantages of being self-employed is the fact that you are completely self-reliant and can make decisions on your own. This can give you a great sense of freedom and allows you to do exactly what you want without interference from anyone else. What is more, your working day can be planned for your convenience, allowing you to work when you want rather than when you have to. Finally, if your business is successful, people will know that you alone should be given the credit.

However, there are disadvantages to being your own boss. Many self-employed people have said that to build a successful business, you have to be prepared to work long hours and sacrifice your personal life. As B. C. Forbes once said, 'If you don't drive your business, you will be driven out of business.' Moreover, a 1996 government study found that over a quarter of the businesses run by newly self-employed people failed within the first two years.

All things considered, it seems to me that self-employment can be a very gratifying experience, although not one without difficulties. But when success is achieved, the greatest reward of all is the knowledge that you have done it on your own.

OPINION ESSAYS

Opinion essays are formal in style. They require your opinion on a topic which must be clearly stated and supported by reasons. It is necessary to include the opposing viewpoint in another paragraph.

A successful opinion essay should have:

a) INTRODUCTION

Paragraph 1: You state the topic and your opinion clearly.

b) MAIN BODY

Paragraph 2: Viewpoint 1 supported by your reasons.

Paragraph 3: Viewpoint 2 supported by your reasons.

(You may include more viewpoints, and therefore more paragraphs in the main body).

Paragraph 4: Giving the opposing viewpoint and reasons

c) CONCLUSION

Paragraph 5: You restate your opinion using different words.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- First decide whether you agree or disagree with the subject of the topic and make a list of your points and reasons.
- Write well-developed paragraphs consisting of more than one sentence.
- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence which summarises what the paragraph is about.
- Linking words should be used throughout your composition.
- Use the techniques shown on p. 66 to begin and end your essay.

USEFUL LANGUAGE:

- To express opinion: *I believe, In my opinion, I think, In my view, I strongly believe, The way I see it, It seems to me (that)*
- To list points: *In the first place, first of all, to start with, Firstly, to begin with, To add more points: what is more, another major reason, also, furthermore, moreover, in addition to this/that, besides, apart from this, not to mention the fact that*
- To introduce contrasting viewpoints: *It is argued that, People argue that, Opponents of this view say, There are people who oppose, Contrary to what most people believe, As opposed to the above ideas*
- To introduce examples: *for example, for instance, such as, in particular, especially*
- To conclude: *To sum up, All in all, All things considered, Taking everything into account*

OPINION ESSAY - SAMPLE 1

'Are you in favour of or against exams being abolished?'

Is too much emphasis placed on examination results today? In my view, their role needs to be re-examined if they are to continue to play a part in the educational system.

In the first place, exams do not actually test a person's knowledge of a subject but rather how much they can remember on the day of the exam. In addition, facts such as students feeling unwell or suffering from a case of nerves on the day of the exams are not taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the exam system is unfair to people who have studied hard but have a poor memory for facts and figures. Also, it is often the case that people who have not studied can copy from someone else who has.

It is argued that exams are the most efficient way of comparing the abilities of a group of people and that an exam will often encourage people to compete to get better grades. Making grades and exam results the main point of learning though, gives students the wrong idea of what education is all about.

In conclusion, it seems to me unfair to give a person only one chance to show what they are capable of. I think that the whole educational system needs to be changed so that exams are not the only way of assessing a student's knowledge.

OPINION ESSAY - SAMPLE 2

‘People spend too much time and money on fashion’

Every season, the great fashion houses of Europe and America present their new collections in the hope of persuading people to renew their wardrobes by purchasing the latest designs. In my opinion, one does not have to be a slave to fashion in order to look smart.

To start with, following the latest trends in fashion can be extremely expensive. This is especially true for those who buy costly designer clothing. There is also the risk of getting into debt in order to keep up with the latest fashions.

In addition to this, followers of fashion often give up their individuality for the sake of fashion. They choose clothes which suit neither their figures nor their personalities. This is unfortunate, as the way we dress should reflect who we really are.

On the other hand, some people argue that it is necessary to dress fashionably in order to create the correct image for their careers. This is particularly true of those who work with the public, as they reflect the image of their company. This does not mean that the latest fashions are the most appropriate, however. Simple but well-made clothes are almost always the best choice for business wear.

To conclude, I strongly believe that it is advisable to dress with style by choosing good quality clothes which suit you as an individual and have lasting elegance. As the famous designer Coco Chanel put it, ‘Fashion is made to become unfashionable.’ So instead of changing your wardrobe constantly, isn’t it better to build up a collection of clothes which you can always wear?